

U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center

**Lean Six Sigma
Communication Plan**

August 5, 2008

USAASC Lean Six Sigma (LSS) Communication Plan

Purpose.

This LSS Communication Plan guides the information flow internally and externally for the U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC) regarding LSS. It outlines the operational relationships necessary to execute LSS and provides essential guidance for training and project generation.

Background.

The 2006 Army Strategic Planning Guidance states that the intent of the Army's LSS effort is to free up human capital and financial resources to better support operational requirements. LSS is being implemented Army wide. Additionally, the Army and ASA(ALT) have mandated that Continuous Improvement be addressed by all personnel in their performance objectives. LSS key leaders:

- The Army lead is the Deputy Undersecretary of the Army (Business Transformation) (DUSA-BT).
- The military lead for LSS deployment in the Army is LTG N. Ross Thompson III, Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology (ASA(ALT)).
- The ASA(ALT) Deployment Director is Mr. Mark Rocke, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Strategic Communication and Business Transformation.
- The ASA(ALT)/AMC Master Black Belt (MBB) is Chad Jones (contractor).
- The current dedicated Black Belt (BB) is TBD.
- USAASC's LSS Deployment Director is LTC Norm Hilton, Chief, Strategic Planning and Analysis (SP&A).

USAASC has no in-house certified BBs or Green Belts (GBs). The USAASC GBs and BBs will be trained, developed and certified as projects are executed and completed. USAASC expects three to six GBs to become certified over the next 12 months. These GBs are representative of the core functions in USAASC. USAASC needs to develop or acquire a BB capability over the next 12 months. This is essential to a self-sustained capability. USAASC will not have its own MBB.

ASA(ALT) expects each organization to generate a pipeline of projects. The near term focus is the identification of projects. LSS projects should address the USAASC Ways from the Strategy Map, since the Ways are process focused. The quantity of projects in progress is dependent on the availability of resources and people. Rapid completion of a few projects at a time is preferable to many "active" projects with little or no progress. USAASC will measure itself in terms of viable, identified projects and project progress.

The complexity of projects determines how long a project should take to complete. The rules of thumb are as follows: For a Rapid Improvement Event (RIE) – 4 to 7 working days; for a GB project – 30 to 90 days; and for a BB project – 3 to 6 months.

Strategic Philosophy.

It is now more important than ever to execute the USAASC mission with the greatest effectiveness and efficiency possible. LSS meshes comfortably with USAASC's strategic plan and the Strategy Map. A key element of the LSS structure is alignment with the organization's mission, vision and goals. "Leadership...identifies points in the organization where performance improvement should have measurable impact on goals, and generates companion Six Sigma process improvement project candidates."¹ The Strategy Map provides an avenue to actively measure USAASC's progress. USAASC further emphasizes the importance and necessity of LSS to achieving its strategy by specifying maintenance of a continuous improvement culture in USAASC as an Overarching Strategy.

Meetings.

The USAASC LSS Deployment Director will meet with the USAASC Director the first Wednesday of every month to provide a status report. At a minimum, this report will address the training level of USAASC, current LSS activities, a status of projects and any deployment issues.

The USAASC LSS Deployment Director, or a representative, will attend ASA(ALT) LSS Deployment Director meetings. ASA(ALT) will direct the frequency of these meetings.

Project teams are expected to meet as frequently as necessary to move their respective projects forward.

Coordinating Instructions.

Any LSS deployment issues requiring higher level support will be addressed with the ASA(ALT) LSS Deployment Director or his team. USAASC responds to data calls from the ASA(ALT) LSS Deployment Director regarding implementation and progress. Areas of reporting may include the training status of BBs/GBs; project status -- in progress, completed and projects planned; the number of project selection activities; and out-year projections.

All approved projects will be tracked and results reported using the Army wide system, PowerSteering®. Project Sponsors will use PowerSteering® to record progress and to move the project through the tollgates.

The Project Sponsors are expected to keep the USAASC Deployment Director informed on the general progress of projects. As a general guideline, progress reports should occur immediately following: a scheduled tollgate review, once a project goes "off

¹ Thomas McCarty, Lorraine Daniels, Michael Bremer, and Praveen Gupta, The Six Sigma Black Belt Handbook, New York : McGraw-Hill 2005, pp 41-42.

track”, or if the tollgate schedule is modified. Additionally Project Sponsors will inform the Deployment Director in writing of all planned project identification sessions; e-mail is sufficient. USAASC Project Sponsors and GBs/BBs will coordinate directly with the supporting ASA(ALT) MBB/BB for issues directly related to the execution of their current projects. The USAASC Deployment Director must be apprised of all issues as well.

The Project Sponsors are primarily responsible for managing the succession planning of their GB personnel and will propose replacements as necessary. Every USAASC core function will have a GB representative.

The USAASC Deployment Director will communicate regularly with the supporting ASA(ALT) MBB or BB to ascertain progress and to assist in ensuring adequate progress is being made.

All training requirements in USAASC will be coordinated through the USAASC Deployment Director’s team (i.e., the SP&A Strategy Team). The team will then work with the ASA(ALT) Deployment Director team, who manages our LSS training quotas, to schedule the training.

Project Selection.

USAASC is responsible for identifying candidate projects. Projects will only be sanctioned, if there is evidence indicating that the changes will result in tangible and quantifiable operational improvements. Until such time as USAASC has an established LSS culture replete with a trained BB, USAASC will rely on the expertise of the supporting ASA(ALT) MBB or BB for project sufficiency.

USAASC Project Sponsors are expected to directly engage the ASA(ALT) BB in conducting Project Identification and Selection Workshops (PISW). Unlike larger organizations, a less formal PISW is adequate for USAASC to identify and select projects.

Project execution timelines are dependent on the availability of team participants. Identification and selection does not mean the project must be started at once. The activity sequence is as follows:

- The Project Sponsor conducts the PISW event with the BB.
- The Project Sponsor develops a charter that meets the BB’s approval.
- The USAASC Deployment Director will assess the commitment of personnel assets to ongoing projects and make recommendations to the USAASC Director.
- Determination of new starts will be coordinated with the Project Sponsor, the USAASC Deployment Director and the USAASC Director.
- The assigned GB will load the project in PowerSteering® and mark it as “On Track.”

If the project is for certification, the candidate will load the project in PowerSteering®, but mark it as “proposed.” The project number generated in PowerSteering® is then used to sign up for the GB or BB training course. Upon entry into the GB or BB course the project is to be moved to “On Track.”

Tollgate Reviews.

Tollgate reviews occur at the critical phases within the LSS framework. There are five reviews: 1) Define, 2) Measure, 3) Analyze, 4) Improve and 5) Control. No project may move to the next tollgate without a review and subsequent approval to move.

Project Sponsors will conduct formal tollgate reviews prior to moving projects to the next phase within PowerSteering®. Attendance is dependent on the tollgate. The following participants must attend every tollgate review: Project Sponsor, ASA(ALT) MBB/BB, and the USAASC BB/GB. The USAASC Deployment Director will attend the tollgate reviews until the organization’s LSS process is mature enough and attendance is no longer warranted. Highly complex projects (BB level) will include the USAASC Director for the Define, Analyze and Control tollgates. The Director may elect to attend any tollgate review at his/her discretion.

GB/BBs are expected to work with their teams and the assigned MBB mentor to prepare the briefings. Project sponsors are ultimately responsible for the forward progress of the project.

Approval to move forward is by consensus (unanimous agreement). This approval is effected in PowerSteering® by the GB, who must request the assigned gate approver’s permission. Additional team members may be invited at the discretion of the GB/BB and the Project Sponsor, but are not part of the decision-making process. Upon approval, all artifacts and updates from the review will be posted in PowerSteering® prior to the gate approver providing final approval.

GBs in training should plan their Define tollgate review to fall between the initial week of training and the final week.

Training Guidelines.

Belt Training. DUSA-BT is the Army’s certification body for LSS and is the only source of recognized LSS training for the Army. No BB/GB training can be scheduled until: 1) a project is identified and chartered; 2) a Project Sponsor is assigned; and 3) the project is in PowerSteering®.

PowerSteering® Training. All GB/BBs will take the PowerSteering® training. It is recommended that the GB/BB complete this training no sooner than 2 weeks prior to the start of the formal belt training. The GB/BB will need this training in order to enter projects into PowerSteering®. The supporting financial analyst should also complete

this training. This training is available online through the DUSA-BT site on Army Knowledge Online (AKO).

Project Sponsor Workshop (PSW). All division chiefs, regional directors, and the Deputy Director are expected to complete the PSW within 60 days of appointment into their respective positions.

Awareness Training. All USAASC personnel (i.e., government or military) are required to complete the Six Sigma online training within 30 days of arrival. Higher levels of training like Executive training, Project Sponsor Workshops, BB or GB will suffice for this requirement. A full description of the course (CLE007) as well as information on the registration process can be found at the <https://learn.dau.mil> website. The course is self-paced; however, once enrolled you must complete the Continuous Learning Module within a 30 calendar day timeframe. Upon successful completion of the module you will receive six (6) Continuous Learning Points (CLPs). Please forward a copy of the certificate of completion to SP&A.

Roles in USAASC.

- Senior Sponsor – USAASC Director
 - Selects BB and GB candidates
 - Chief LSS advocate
- Deployment Director – Chief, SP&A
 - Leads the LSS Effort
 - Identifies the BB and GB candidates
 - Tracks overall implementation and progress
 - Reports deployment metrics to ASA(ALT)
 - Develops organizational training plan
 - Validates the Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed (RACI) Deployment chart
- Project Sponsor – Project team lead
 - Oversees the project
 - Builds the team
 - Ensures the charter is developed
 - Implements solutions
 - Owns the financial results
 - Must attend Project Sponsor Workshop training (3-day course)
- BB
 - Provides oversight and expertise to the LSS effort

- Organizationally part of SP&A
- Full time position
- Mentors GBs
- Should be a future leader
- Must be certified by DUSA-BT
- GB
 - “Tip of the spear”
 - Part-time position
 - Manages and leads project on a day-to-day basis
 - Assists in selection of team
 - Supports other BB projects
 - Must be certified by DUSA-BT
- Process Owner
 - Has a predominant involvement in the process
 - Has a primary functional responsibility
 - Responsible for development of the Value Stream Analysis
- Financial Analyst
 - Tracks financial benefits gained by projects (i.e., financial payback/ return on investment)
 - Provides financial expertise in assessing the value of projects
 - Critical to the successful deployment of LSS
- Team Members
 - Process Lead (Subject matter expert in process role)
 - Key Stakeholders (some participation)
 - Representatives from other divisions with roles in the process

Outreach.

The Deployment Director will provide the status and any good news stories regarding LSS on a monthly basis to the USAASC community. This may be done through various media including e-mail blasts, LSS meetings, All Hands Meetings or the USAASC Newsletter. USAASC LSS briefings, when conducted, will be distinct from other staff meetings.

Upon completion of a Control Tollgate, the BB/GB will conduct a lessons learned session with the USAASC LSS principals. The principals are comprised of the LSS Deployment Cell, the Project Sponsors, and the BBs/GBs to include identified future

belts. The lessons learned session will be coordinated through the LSS Deployment Cell. This session should occur within thirty days of the approved Control tollgate.

SP&A maintains an LSS folder on the Acquisition Support Center Knowledge Collaboration Center (KCC) on AKO. The folder contains LSS tools, templates, training slides, newsletters, etc.